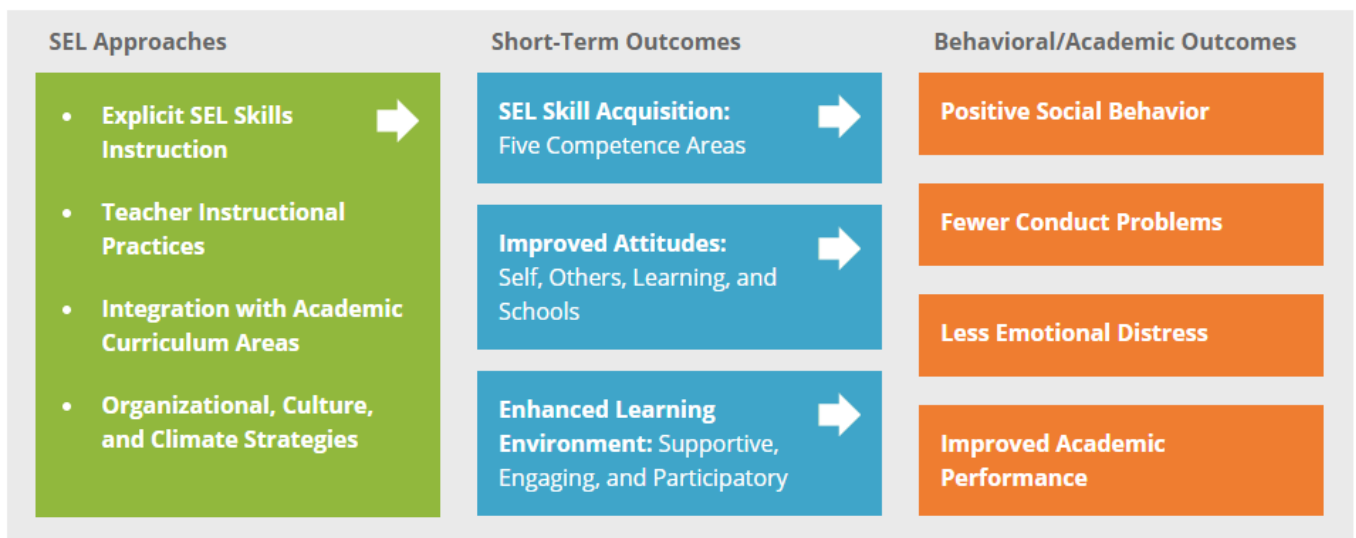# Approaches

Research has shown that social and emotional development can be fostered, and social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors can be taught using a variety of approaches:

- Free-standing lessons designed to enhance students' social and emotional competence explicitly.
- Teaching practices such as cooperative learning and project-based learning, which promote SEL.
- Integration of SEL an academic curriculum such as language arts, math, social studies, or health.
- Organizational strategies that promote SEL as a schoolwide initiative that creates a climate and culture conducive to learning.

SEL Approaches	Short-Term Outcomes	Behavioral/Academic Outcomes
• **Explicit SEL Skills Instruction**	**SEL Skill Acquisition:** Five Competence Areas	**Positive Social Behavior**
• **Teacher Instructional Practices**	**Improved Attitudes:** Self, Others, Learning, and Schools	**Fewer Conduct Problems**
• **Integration with Academic Curriculum Areas**		**Less Emotional Distress**
• **Organizational, Culture, and Climate Strategies**	**Enhanced Learning Environment:** Supportive, Engaging, and Participatory	**Improved Academic Performance**

Effective SEL approaches often incorporate four elements represented by the acronym **SAFE:**

- *Sequenced:* Connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development.
- *Active:* Active forms of learning to help students master new skills and attitudes.
- *Focused:* A component that emphasizes developing personal and social skills.
- *Explicit:* Targeting specific social and emotional skills.

Ideally schools will use SAFE approaches to support the social and emotional development of their students. For example:

- Children can to be taught through modeling and coaching to recognize how they feel or how someone else might be feeling.
- Prompting the use of a conflict-resolution skill and using dialoguing to guide students through the steps can be an effective approach to helping them apply a skill in a new situation.
- Through class meetings students can practice group decision-making and setting classroom rules.
- Students can learn cooperation and teamwork through participation in team sports and games.
- Students can deepen their understanding of a current or historical event by analyzing it through a set of questions based on a problem-solving model.
- Cross-age mentoring, in which a younger student is paired with an older one, can be effective in building self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and enhancing academic skills.
- Having one member of a pair describe a situation to his partner and having the partner repeat what he or she heard is an effective tool in teaching reflective listening.

Multiple Approaches Across Multiple Settings

The educational goals of SEL are more likely to be achieved when evidence-based approaches are used to reach students in all settings where they spend their time — in classrooms, throughout the school, in the home, and in the community. See what SEL looks like in these settings.

- Classrooms
- Schools
- Homes
- Districts

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